

The Eclectic Theosophist

FOLLOWING THE BLAVATSKY AND POINT LOMA TRADITION

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Editors: W. Emmett Small, Helen Todd

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ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Anniversaries are significant not so much for outward ceremonial but in the thought they inspire. It is a century and a half since H.P. Blavatsky's birth (1831, July 31st or—Russian calendar—August 11th). What, then, are some of our first thoughts? What would HPB herself think of this date? Nothing, she might say, as far as her personality is concerned. But everything so far as the work she represented. That work was not her own, but that of sublime Intelligences for which, or for whom, she selflessly acted as vehicle and mouthpiece.

And in answer to the question: What can we do to make this date memorable? It is probable that in her own modest yet forthright way she would say: **WORK FOR THEOSOPHY**. Three words, but if understood rightly they cover all. Each Society, each Group, each individual, of the great Theosophical Movement, has unquestionably over the years given deep thought to this adjuration, has, perhaps stumbly, lived up somewhat to its challenge. But today is always a day of new opportunity. Let us give thought here to HPB's own words, as sent to the Fifth Convention of the American Section of the T.S., April 15th, 1891:

After all, every wish and thought I can utter are summed up in this one sentence, the never-dormant wish of my heart, "Be Theosophists, work for Theosophy!" Theosophy first, and Theosophy last; for its *practical* realization alone can save the Western world from that selfish and unbrotherly feeling that now divides race from race, one nation from the other; and from that hatred of class and social considerations that are the curse and disgrace of so-called Christian peoples. Theosophy alone can save it from sinking entirely into that mere luxurious materialism in which it will decay and putrefy as civilizations have done....

There we have our ever-present keynote. Let it sound strong and clear. And let wise action follow.

Point Loma Publications marks this anniversary of H.P. Blavatsky's birth with the re-printing in our *Eclectic* of pages from the June 1891 issue of the *Review of Reviews*, edited by W.T. Stead, a literary figure of some note of that time. Mr. Stead's own introductory commentary precedes the "Sketch of the Month"—this one by A.P. Sinnett on HPB who had died in London on May 8th. The front cover on the old copy we have is missing except for a section which we reduce and reproduce here:

20 PORTRAITS, 25 CARICATURES, AND FOUR FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS.



For those who may wish to have separate additional copies of these 12 pages of the *Review of Reviews*, we have arranged their insertion in four pages of regular *Eclectic* copy, making thus a double-issue of 16 pages, which will cover the four months of July-October this year. Our next mailing after this, with our usual News and Notes, will be the November-December issue.

—THE EDITORS

THE WRITINGS OF H.P. BLAVATSKY

Fifty years ago, in the July-August 1931 issue of the Point Loma periodical *Lucifer, the Light-Bringer*, the lead article, titled "H.P.B.", is by Boris de Zirkoff. It outlines the scope envisioned for the publishing of the collected writings of H.P.B. Already then seven years had been given to this project. It has taken 50 more to see its conclusion with the projected volumes 13 and 14 soon to be published. The whole article is of historic interest, and we had hoped to reprint it here in its entirety, but space now permits inclusion only of its last but very pertinent paragraph.

—EDS.

The writings of H. P. B. are the foundation-stone of the modern Theosophical Movement. Their study unifies. The principles of Truth they contain bind people together, and when their key-note is struck—all differences cease. Today, when a world-wide movement for Theosophical unification is abroad, the publication of the Centennial Edition of H. P. B.'s writings cannot but contribute to the ultimate realization of that unity. Above the controversies created by personal opinions, outside of arguments generated by brain-mind conceptions, stands unmoved and unchanged the primal basis of teachings, the doctrinal background against which is projected, as it were, the life of each earnest student of Theosophical philosophy. This background of doctrines can be found as a thread running through the various writings of H. P. B. It is a golden thread. It binds men and women in universal, all-embracing sympathy. It strengthens their nature; it leads to a world of Light and Peace. And to promote that Peace and keep the Light from fading, this Edition of H. P. B.'s writings has been collected in loving memory of her self-forgetful work for all that lives.

—B. DE ZIRKOFF

H. P. BLAVATSKY, LEADER AND TEACHER

HENRY T. EDGE

An address delivered in the Temple of Peace, Point Loma, May 7, 1933

...It was in the summer of 1887 that I found myself an undergraduate of King's College, Cambridge, England, engaged in the pursuit of natural science, and first heard, through the chance remark of a friend, about A. P. Sinnett's books *The Occult World* and *Esoteric Buddhism*. This sent me to the library, where I read the very few Theosophical books then existing, such as the above-mentioned works, *Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky*, *Light on the Path*. I had, up to the age of eighteen or nineteen, adopted the scientific view of the universe, held at that time, wherein we were invited to find in *matter* the promise and potency of all that is. But I was always of what may be called a religious temperament, and also of a mystical temperament, and this view was far from satisfying to me. I chanced to read a book called *The Night-Side of Nature* by the novelist Catherine Crowe, which contains a large collection of ghost stories and accounts of apparitions and similar phenomena, collected from all over the world and from many different times. There was enough real evidence in this to satisfy an impartial mind that the materialistic view of the universe would not suffice to explain all that could happen. Added to this, I read Bulwer Lytton's stories dealing with the occult. I dabbled in various things, such as Swedenborgianism, Phrenology, and anything with a savor of the occult and mystic; and even joined the Society for Psychical Research, then recently formed and having an important branch at Cambridge.

The idea which most fascinated me was the possibility of Magicians, Adepts, highly evolved men having vast power over Nature; but what troubled me was that all the magicians I could hear of seemed to be on the wrong path. The one in Bulwer's *The Haunted and the Haunters*, and the Margrave in his *Strange Story*, were evil; and as for Zanon and Mejnour, there was in them on the whole more to repel than to attract. And it was precisely at this point that the message of Theosophy most strongly appealed to me; for it showed me that there could be such a thing as a White Magician, a Master of Wisdom and Compassion; and that I need no longer struggle between the alternatives of ambition for power and determination to follow conscience—alternatives which had so far seemed irreconcilable. In a word, Theosophy resolved the discord in my heart and focussed my aims into one direction.

As soon as possible I secured an introduction to Madame Blavatsky and went to London to visit her. She had, on an easel in her sitting-room, a portrait in oils of her Teacher, one of the Masters of Wisdom; and it was this face which, more than any other one thing, impressed me. It was so evidently the portrait of a real man and revealed to me at a glance what possibilities there are before us all in the way of development along the lines which lead to true perfection.

Of Madame Blavatsky herself I shall say that I had abundant evidence of her dual rôle as a lady mingling in the ordinary social life of the people around her, and a real Teacher able to communicate certain knowledge to any pupil able to receive it—giving the right knock, as we say. As a personality she was a typical traveler, full of animation and anecdote, with the refinement and easy manners of her class in society, and most remarkable for frankness and the complete absence of hypocrisy.

Though very infirm in health, owing to her extremely strenuous life and to the sufferings which she had had to endure through persecution, her indomitable will filled her with energy, so that she worked incessantly at writing *The Secret Doctrine*, editing and writing for *Lucifer*, superintending the affairs of the Society, entertaining visitors, and innumerable other things. She sat in her armchair, carrying on two conversations at once, one in English, the other in French, smoking cigarettes, and playing solitaire. But, for anyone able to 'give the right knock,' the Teacher would immediately be revealed; and she could pass without effort from the one rôle to the other, in responding to the calls made upon her. It would seem that I had sufficiently understood the nature of her work and the part she was playing as a Messenger from the Masters of Wisdom, to be able to come in contact with this greater side of her, and to evoke a recognition and response. For I became her pupil, was set by her on the right path, and pledged my life to the service of the cause she represented.

And what was this cause? It was to restore to the consciousness of present humanity a knowledge which it had lost, and to make us aware of the existence of the Wisdom-Religion or Secret Doctrine, which has been handed down and preserved through the ages by its guardians, the Masters of Wisdom, or, as they have been appropriately called, the Elder Brothers of Humanity. This Wisdom-Religion is the foundation of all Religion, all Philosophy, and all Science; it is the great unity from which spring all diversities, all temporary and local systems. It was of this fundamental knowledge, this master-key, that humanity stood most in need; floundering as humanity was in a maze of credulity and speculation, trusting to worn-out religious formulas on the one hand and to materialistic so-called 'scientific' nightmares on the other; and yet feeling from within that importunate voice of the essentially divine nature of man, speaking from the heart and crying for recognition. The Messenger came to gather together select people from all quarters who might be found ready to respond to the appeal; and of these to form a nucleus, an embodiment, an organized society, to promote and continue the work. Thus was founded the Theosophical Society. ...

The 'Heart-Doctrine' is associated with the name of H. P. Blavatsky, and is distinguished from the 'Doctrine of the Eye' or 'head-Learning.' It was she who set my feet firmly on this path. Theosophy is ethical in the true sense. Morals may be variable, local, national; but this is only as regards the mere surface. There is a basic and permanent morality,



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CHARACTER SKETCH: JUNE.

MADAME BLAVATSKY.

INTRODUCTORY.



AMONG the many and varied spiritual teachers to whom I have listened in the course of a very eclectic journalistic career, Madame Blavatsky was one of the most original. There are those who imagine that because they can crack a joke about a teacup, they have disposed of Theosophy, just as there are some

who seem to think a sneer at the pigs of Gadara roots up the foundations of the Christian religion. To such gentry it will no doubt be a scandal that I should devote the Character Sketch this month to "H.P.B.," whose death last month deprived London of one of the most remarkable of its inhabitants. Madame Blavatsky, they say, "was an impostor, a vulgar fraud. She was exposed by the Coulombs, shown up by the Psychical Research Society, and last, if not least, she has been jumped upon, almost before her ashes were cool, by the *Pall Mall Gazette*." They say all that, no doubt, but

when all that is said and more besides, the problem of the personality of the woman remains full of interest, and even of wonder, to those who look below the surface of things.

Madame Blavatsky was a great woman. She was not the faultless monster whom the world ne'er saw, and it must be admitted she was in more senses than one something of a monster. She was huge in body, and in her character, alike in its strength and weakness, there was something of the Rabelaisian gigantesque. But if she had all the nodosity of the oak, she was not without its strength; and if she had the contortions of the Sibyl, she possessed somewhat of her inspiration.

Of Madame Blavatsky the wonder-worker I knew nothing; I did not go to her seeking signs, and most assuredly no sign was given me. She neither doubled a teacup in my presence nor grew a gold ring out of a rosebud, nor did she even cause the familiar raps to be heard. All these manifestations seemed as the mere trivialities, the shavings, as it were, thrown off from the beam of cedar wood which she was fashioning as one of the pillars in the Temple of Truth. I do not remember ever referring to them in our conversations, and it is slightly incomprehensible to me how any one can gravely contend that they constitute her claim to respect. It would be almost as reasonable to contend that Christianity is based upon the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius.

What Madame Blavatsky did was an immeasurably greater thing than the doubling of teacups. She made it possible for some of the most cultivated and sceptical men and women of this generation to believe—believe ardently, to an extent that made them proof against ridicule and disdainful of persecution, that not only does the invisible world that encompasses us contain Intelligences vastly superior to our own in knowledge of the Truth, but that it is possible for man to enter into communion with these hidden and silent ones, and to be taught of them the Divine mysteries of Time and of Eternity. She not only made it possible for them to believe it,



From a photo]

"H. P. B."

by Leta Stetter Baigster.

MADAME BLAVATSKY.

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but she made them believe it, and founded what was to all intents and purposes a Church upon that article of belief. That is a great achievement, and one which *a priori* would have been laughed at as impossible. Yet she performed that miracle. Madame Blavatsky, a Russian, suspected of being a spy, converted leading Anglo-Indians to a passionate belief in her Theosophy mission, even when the Jingo fever was hottest, and in her declining years she succeeded in winning over to the new-old religion Annie Besant, who had for years fought in the forefront of the van of militant atheism.

A woman who could achieve these two things was a woman indeed. "But," it will be objected, "her Theosophy is all moonshine." Perhaps it is; but is not moonshine better than outer darkness, and is not moonshine itself but the pale reflection of the rays of the sun? I am not, however, by any means prepared to admit that the creed which Madame Blavatsky preached with such savage fervour deserves to be scouted as mere moonshine.

To begin with, it has at least the advantage of being heretical. The truth always begins as heresy. In every heresy there may be the germ of a new revelation. Then, in the second place, it brought back to the scientific and sceptical world the great conception of the greatest religions, the existence of sublime beings, immeasurably superior to the pigmy race of men, who stand, as it were, midway between the Infinite and ourselves. Of the immense but invisible hierarchy which to our forefathers spanned the fathomless abyss between God and man, hardly even the memory now remains. In her strange, weird fashion Madame Blavatsky resuscitated this ancient faith. To men like Mr. Sinnett her great doctrine of the Mahatmas, of the existence of a brotherhood of sublime sages, the vicegerents of the Infinite, did something to repeople the void which modern scepticism has depopulated. But she did more than this. Others have taught of the existence of Thrones, Principalities, and Powers in heavenly places. But between them and us there has been a great gulf fixed. The Archangel is as mute as Deity, the benevolence of the patron Saint never leads him to open up communications with his mortal clients. Madame Blavatsky taught not merely that the Mahatmas existed, but that they were able and willing to enter into direct communication with men. Madame Blavatsky proclaimed herself as the directly commissioned messenger of the celestial hierarchy, charged by them to reveal the Path by which any one who was worthy and willing might enter into direct communion with these sublime Intelligences. I was but an outsider in the court of the Gentiles, a curious observer, and never a disciple. I cannot speak of these inner mysteries to which only the initiates are admitted. But Mr. A. P. Sinnett, journalist and man of science, Anglo-Indian and man of the world, assures me, in accents of impassioned conviction that he and others who have followed her teachings have entered into the reality of that spiritual communion, and have no more doubt of the reality of the existence of the Mahatmas than they have of the rate-collector, or the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Mr. Schmiedchen, the artist, even painted the portrait of a Mahatma, but except on his canvas the sublime brotherhood remain somewhat shadowy to the uninitiated.

Madame Blavatsky, in the midst of a generation that is materialist and mechanical, which probed everything, and dissected even the human heart with a scalpel, did at least succeed in compelling a race of scientists and economists to realise the existence of the conception that all material things are but a passing illusion, and that the spiritual alone is.

Madame Blavatsky also reinforced and almost re-created in many minds the sense of this life being a mere probation. In this respect her teaching was much more in accord with the spirit of the New Testament than much of the pseudo-Christian teaching of our day. She widened the horizon of the mind, and she brought something of the infinite sense of vast, illimitable mystery which characterises some of the Eastern religions into the very heart of Europe in the nineteenth century.

To have done all this, and to have done it almost single-handed, in face of the almost insuperable obstacles interposed by her own defects, renders comprehensible the theory that Madame Blavatsky had help the world could neither see nor take away. To her disciples she was but the frail and faulty-speaking trumpet of the Mahatmas, those lieutenants of Deity who commissioned her to teach, and also gave to her mouth matter and wisdom to proclaim the true doctrine for the redemption of man. These things are too high for me. I no more intermeddle with them than with the dogma of the Infallibility of the Pope. It is the human side, both of Theosophy and of Rome, that fascinates me. Madame Blavatsky may have had converse with semi-celestial Intelligences in Thibet. Of that I can say nothing. But I can say of my own knowledge that she was undoubtedly a very gifted and original woman to converse with in Ladbroke Grove, a fiery, impulsive, passionate creature, full of failings, and personally the very reverse of beautiful. There she was, a wonderful and powerful personality, the

My Dear Mr. Sinnett
 This may seem a poor
 compliment in your eyes -
 but in mine it is the
 greatest one I can make
 when I say -
You are a true theosophist!
 in heart & soul, whatever
 else you may call yourself
 Yours gratefully and
 ever at your service

H. P. Blavatsky

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like of which I have never met either in Russia or in England. She was unique, but she was intensely human, and a woman to her heart's core.

She aroused the passionate devotion of both men and women. She was to her followers as the oracle of God. They had this treasure in a very earthen vessel, but it was there.

I cannot do justice to her many-sided character. Mr. Sinnett, who has been the literary exponent of "Esoteric Buddhism," and also is the most distinguished of her converts among men, kindly consented to write for my readers a Character Sketch of the deceased prophetess. Of his qualifications for this task I need hardly speak. Mr. Sinnett was editor of the *Pioneer* in India for ten years. It was during that time, in 1879, he first met Madame Blavatsky. In 1881 he published "The Occult World," a book recounting his experience of abnormal phenomena witnessed in Madame Blavatsky's presence. Assisted by her to get into direct relations with certain Eastern initiates, he says

that he acquired from them the instruction in "Esoteric" or Occult Philosophy, which enabled him in 1883 to publish "Esoteric Buddhism." His next Theosophical book was a novel, called "Karina," followed by another novel, "United," and then in 1886 he wrote "Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky." Soon after his return from India in 1883 he became President of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society, which branch, however, has been almost in abeyance, and he has not felt called upon to play any active part in public life during Madame Blavatsky's presence here at the head of the "Blavatsky Lodge." For a dozen years Mr. Sinnett has been the intimate friend and disciple of Madame Blavatsky. He has written her life; he has defended her inspiration; he has interpreted and popularised the doctrine which she has taught. It is therefore but natural that he should describe the character of the strange but great Original, whose unwieldy remains were cremated at Woking last month.

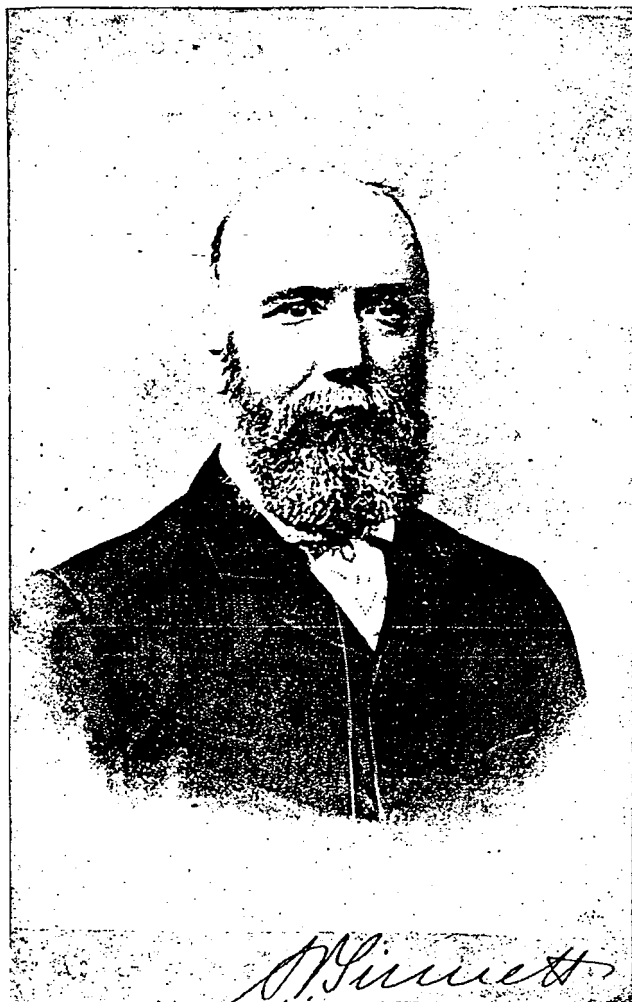
"H. P. B." BY MR. A. P. SINNETT.

THE world at large has heard too much about Mme. Blavatsky, and has known too little. Her misfortune was that she was interesting to average newspaper readers, and a grievously inviting sub-

ject for average newspaper writers. As she believed—as all Theosophists believe—she was concerned with bearing a message to the world of grave importance and infinite solemnity. It was not half uttered—not a hundredth part understood—before it was snapped up by every lively journalist in search of a new joke. Modern society has lost a great deal by gaining whatever amusement was involved in the treatment of Mme. Blavatsky as food for caricature. It is further to be regretted that she herself all the while, very sensitive to suffering of all kinds, has writhed in misery beneath the jeering to which she has been exposed. Now that at last she has bequeathed to the flames the battered and unwieldy physique that has burdened her fiercely energetic spirit so long, the time has perhaps come for focussing public attention a little more closely than has been possible hitherto on the work and purpose of her life.

THE LAST THREE YEARS OF HER LIFE.

Only four or five years ago she seemed fairly overwhelmed by the tide of obloquy turned against her by the Psychical Research Society. I visited her at Wurzburg in 1886, and then she had very few friends left, very little purpose in this life except to write her long-promised book, "The Secret Doctrine," and was spending her time in almost complete seclusion; while the world at large spoke of her as a detected impostor, and the Report against her, by a representative of the Society just named, was complacently regarded by its author as having put an end once for all to one of the most extraordinary delusions of the age. Bit by bit the famous Report has been torn to pieces by competent critics, till hardly a rag of it remains. The inextinguishable force of Mme. Blavatsky's character has borne her forward and far more than recovered for her all her lost ground. She has been for the last three years the centre of a devoted circle of disciples, the nucleus of a great organisation of occult students, which included over a thousand persons. The weekly lectures given in her presence by her Theosophical pupils have been attended by crowded audiences. Never before in her life has she been made so much of as during these last few years, when the vigour of her mind, the irresistible personal influence she exhaled, have simply pushed into the background, as so much silly impertinence, the accusations of fraud and trickery which



From a photo by]

[Thomas Fall,

MADAME BLAVATSKY.

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looked at one time formidable enough to menace her with annihilation as a public teacher.

A GREAT SPIRITUAL REALITY.

Like many other prophets and seers, she has been scorned and denounced, but her strength has been greater than that of her assailants. She has been suffering continually from illness, and partly through muscular weakness, partly because of her inconveniently bulky proportions, could scarcely get about more than from one room to another; but her mental and moral energy has made her the absolute chief of her large, heterogeneous household, and of the busy volunteer staff of the Society she directed. A state of things like this should be recognised as more eloquent than petty details of disputable evidence pointing to the theory that she concocted spurious marvels. Vulgar cheating does not bring forth ever-increasing devotion and respect as its fruit. It is impossible to account for Mme. Blavatsky in any intelligent way except by regarding her as a great spiritual reality.

THE SPIRIT OF HER TEACHING.

Nothing in her external attributes prepared one at the first glance to look at her in that light. She was rugged and eccentric in her ways and appearance; she dressed anyhow—in loose wrappers—and smoked cigarettes incessantly. Worse than this, she was passionate and excitable, and often violent in her language. Namby-pamby conventionality shrank from her aghast—to her grim satisfaction, for she loathed it. She had a loud voice, that grew harsh in its tones when she felt irritated, and something or other would irritate her fifty times a day. And yet her disciples, summing up the spirit of her teaching in the course of the address read at her cremation, say: "A clean life, an open mind, a pure heart, an eager intellect, an unveiled spiritual perception, a brotherliness for all, a courageous endurance of

personal injustice, a constant eye to the ideal of human progress and perfection which the sacred science depicts—these are the golden stairs up the steps of which the learner may climb to the temple of Divine Wisdom." If we are to judge a tree by its fruits, we may judge Madame Blavatsky, to some extent, at all events, by the principles we find flourishing amongst those who are proud to acknowledge themselves her followers in the path of occult development.



From a photo]

[by Elliott and Fry.

MADAME BLAVATSKY (LATEST PORTRAIT).

HER MESSAGE TO THE WORLD.

No one will ever make sense of Mme. Blavatsky's career, or understand her influence, if they try to think of her as a woman of genius on her own foundation, so to speak, with ideas and theories of life and a great zeal for these, as other enthusiasts have been zealous for other theories and ideas. The tremendous importance of Mme. Blavatsky in the circle of her followers was due to the conviction they all felt that she was the visible agent of powers and personages transcending those of the ordinary world. Ancient theories of religion embodied the belief that by going through certain processes of training and initiation, men still living could attain to superior spiritual conditions, acquiring faculties and powers of an exalted order. Occult students conceive that, though there are no institutions in London to provide facilities for

initiation, and no priests in our day qualified to confer degrees on the aspirant for spiritual progress, nevertheless wisdom and knowledge concerning spiritual things have not died out of the world altogether. A great many persons connected with the Theosophical Society regard themselves as in contact with the present representatives of that higher evolution, and acknowledge such contact as having been originally brought about by or in some way through the intermediation of Mme. Blavatsky. The message, in fact, which she had to deliver, was to the effect that those who had the courage and qualifications for treading it might

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still find the way of occult initiation open; that real knowledge concerning the possibilities of spiritual progress lying before mankind was procurable, and that a very lofty rule of life had to be adopted by those who would enter on "the Path."

HER LIFE AT AVENUE ROAD.

Teaching these principles incessantly by speech and pen, Mme. Blavatsky has effectually lived down the distorted misrepresentations of her character put about from time to time by people who have resented and disbelieved in her wonder-working. At 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, where she resided, at the head, practically, of a large co-operative household, she was treated with



AT ALLAHABAD, 1879.

an ardent respect that amounted to something like devotion. Shielded by this more than affectionate esteem, even she, sensitive as she has always been to attack, has learnt in the evening of her life to care a little less than formerly about the rude sneers of the outer world. She has been more at peace of late at the Avenue Road than during any other period of her varied career, though as busy as ever with her pen. The change and amusement required by most people played no part in her existence. To realise her as she has been for the last few years, we have only to get into the mind's eye a picture of her writing-room at the Avenue Road, with a large writing-table in the middle, the window shielded with a fern-glass over the lower half to the left, another table to her right, laden with books, photograph-stands, and receptacles for

papers, a sofa behind her, bookcases against the walls, a chair or two for the accommodation of visitors, but for herself always the big armchair at the writing-table—suited to her ample proportions—in which she permanently lived.

How she hated her ample proportions, by the by! When I corresponded with her in India, before I knew her personally, she used to describe herself as a "hippopotamus" and a Calmuck savage, though the bright and lively style of these descriptions counterbalanced their alarming purport. Then she chafed furiously at the cruel fate that had made her a woman—in this incarnation.

THE ESOTERIC SECTION.

The back room, opening out of her writing room, was her bedroom. It was variety enough for her to pass from one chamber to the other, though sometimes she would get as far as the lecture hall adjacent to the house, which the Theosophical Society built for the convenience of its meetings when Mme. Blavatsky and her group of friends settled in the Avenue Road.

Beyond Mme. Blavatsky's room, and opening out of it, was "the secretaries'" room, where two or three young men, devoted adherents of the "Blavatsky Lodge" of the Theosophical Society and members of the Avenue Road establishment, carried on the business of the Society and that of Mme. Blavatsky's magazine, *Lucifer*, under her general direction; and the "Esoteric Section" alone gave them plenty to do, for this branch of the Theosophical organisation engaged Mme. Blavatsky's deepest interest and energies in the recent latter days. It was formed by her, on her own individual authority, of people desirous of getting her teachings and willing to take certain pledges prescribed to them, binding them very closely in allegiance to her in all theosophical matters. Her writing-room just described came at last to be all but lined with photographic portraits, for she made all her "esotericists," as she called them, send her their photographs, and their numbers went rolling on until, reckoning members abroad—chiefly in America—the esotericists were more than a thousand strong. To them she caused type-written letters of instruction to be sent out from time to time, and all such letters, of course, in the first instance emanated from her own pen. But these compositions would be mere trifles as regards their magnitude compared to her other writings. Her never-resting mind required no relaxation from work beyond that involved in conversation with friends, chiefly about her work. It has been so ever since I first knew her in 1879; it was so before that, ever since the public phase of her career commenced, four or five years before that date, as I am informed, when she began her work by writing "Isis Unveiled" at New York, and stuck to that gigantic task—without breaking off, so to speak, except to talk with her early American friends and work occult wonders for their gratification—for about a year and a-half.

HER EARLY LIFE.

The great effort on which the production of "Isis" fairly launched her, will be better appreciated by help of a brief glance at her earlier private life. She has been so self-reliant from so young an age that commonplace facts concerning her birth and parentage seem of no consequence. However, they are easily told, and will be found abundantly authenticated, and in fuller detail, in the book by the present writer, entitled "Incidents in the Life of Mme. Blavatsky." She was born in 1831 at Ekaterinoslow, in the south of Russia, the daughter

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of Colonel Hahn, of the Mecklenburg family, Hahn von Rottenstern Hahn. On the mother's side she was of the Dolgorouky stock. She had a strange childhood, replete with abnormal occurrences, being, as every occultist would conjecture, a medium and clairvoyante by nature. In 1848 she married or was married to General Blavatsky, whom she herself says was then between sixty and seventy—nearer seventy. She was utterly headstrong and ungovernable at this time. She fell in with the marriage idea apparently to refute a governess who taunted her with being such a vixen that no man would have anything to do with her, and then, horrified at many surprises she encountered on the threshold of her new condition, fled away after a few stormy months to relatives at Tiflis. Thence she was despatched to join her father at Odessa, but again she evaded authority and made her way to Constantinople, where she fell in with a Russian countess of her acquaintance, and travelled about with her for some time in Egypt, Greece, and other parts of Eastern Europe.

HER WANDERINGS.

From this time on for about twenty years she wandered about the world, getting supplies of money from time to time from her father, always on the look-out for wonders and mysteries and for people of any kind qualified to open for her the doors of occult knowledge.



MADAME IN EARLY LIFE.

A photograph, taken from a portrait painted while she was still quite a young woman, is reproduced herewith, and gives some traits which those who knew her in later life will still be able to recognise. A blatant world, "all ear and eye, with such a stupid heart to interpret ear and eye," has coined a score of groundless charges against her, on the assumption that a life so unconventional must have been riotous and vicious. There are people who

cannot realise how any man or woman having the opportunity can be otherwise than vicious. But Mme. Blavatsky was abnormal in this respect. She deserved no credit for not being sensual, any more than a horse might deserve credit for not drinking absinthe. Her love of a wandering life sprang from no instincts of the kind that may sometimes prompt such restless activity. She cared nothing, it is true, for refinement in the ordinary sense of the word, even hating the superficial graces and ornamentation of life; but she cared still less, to the extent of getting far on the other side of zero in respect to such feelings, for the whole range of emotions having to do with the pleasures of sense. As a mere subordinate illustration of this, her dislike of alcohol in all forms amounted to a comically intense loathing. The indefatigable tongue of slander has charged her, amongst other things, with drinking. One might as well charge a polar bear with setting fire to an iceberg.

"THE PHENOMENA."

She was relatively in good health in her New York days when the Theosophical Society was first founded by a very small group of enthusiasts in 1875, and wonders of many kinds surrounded its origin. I do not propose here to argue the question of Madame's "phenomena" at any length, but one could no more write a memoir on trigonometry and say nothing about triangles, than survey the strange career just concluded and ignore the marvels corruscating all through it. And at this early period of her enterprise she seems to have depended more on the startling effect of surprising powers she was enabled to exhibit than on the philosophical teaching concerning the evolution of man and the world, and the ultimate destinies, or rather, the opportunities lying before humanity for those who can appreciate them, which became the burden of her later utterances. I have never been able to gather from her that she had any settled plan of operations at New York. In a general way she wished to make known the existence of Eastern Initiates possessing knowledge and powers far transcending those of ordinary humanity. She had not yet got the whole idea of a spiritual crusade which should lead converts into "the Path" of occult development formulated in her mind. This was brought into shape later on in India when she migrated thither accompanied by Col. Olcott and when the Theosophical Society began to acquire momentum in that country.

IN INDIA.

At this stage my own acquaintance with her began in 1879. Her troubles at this time were all before her, and they had not yet begun to depress her naturally buoyant spirits. Her friends of recent date have only known her weakened by illness, somewhat embittered and disheartened by calumny, contumely, and misrepresentation; almost sternly bent on preaching the lofty ethics of the Theosophic code, and drifting into a position in which, as the recognised spiritual chief of so many earnest followers, she was hardly able to divest herself of a quasi-papal character. When the movement she set on foot was still in its infancy, she was burdened by none of these oppressive circumstances. Her bright intellect and abundant wit made her a charming conversationalist, and many people, I am sure, who met her at Allahabad in the year just mentioned, will remember her chiefly as a very delightful companion at the dinner table, full of sparkling and eccentric anecdotes, and only unconventional enough to be an amusing feature of any gathering she joined. For she would never allow herself the strong

language in which she sometimes indulged when any but intimate friends were present. As I have said in describing her as she was at this period in the book already referred to: "No one with the least discernment could ever fail to see that her rugged manners and disregard of all conventionalities were the result of a deliberate rebellion against, not of ignorance or unfamiliarity with, the customs of refined society. Still, the rebellion was often very determined, and she would sometimes colour her language with expletives of all sorts, some witty and amusing, some unnecessarily violent, that we should all have preferred her not to make use of. She certainly had none of the superficial attributes one might have expected in a spiritual teacher; and how she could at the same time be philosopher enough to have given up the world for the sake of spiritual advancement, and yet be capable of going into frenzies of passion about trivial annoyances, was a profound mystery to us for a long while, and is only now partially explainable within my own mind, by some information I have received relating to curious psychological laws under which initiates in occult mysteries, circumstanced as she is, inevitably come. By slow degrees only, and in spite of herself—in spite of injudicious proceedings on her part, that long kept alive suspicions she might easily have allayed if she could have kept calm enough to understand them—did we come to appreciate the reality of the occult forces and unseen agencies behind her; . . . but guests, especially if they happened to be of a very materialistic temperament, would regard anything Mme. Blavatsky might do of an apparently abnormal character as so much juggling, and hardly disguise these impressions from her. The result in such cases would be a stormy end to our evening after such guests had gone. To be suspected as an impostor, deluding her friends with trickery, would sting her at any time with a scorpion smart, and bring forth a flood of passionate argument as to the cruelty and groundlessness of such an imputation.

"Recollection of this time supplies me with a very varied assortment of memory portraits of Madame taken during different conditions of her nerves and temper. Some recall her flushed and voluble, too loudly declaiming against some person or other who had misjudged her or her Society; some show her quiet and companionable, pouring out a flood of interesting talk about Mexican antiquities, or Egypt and Peru, showing a knowledge of the most varied and far-reaching kind, and a memory for names and archaeological theories she would be dealing with, that was fairly fascinating to her hearers. Then, again, I remember her telling anecdotes of her own earlier life, mysterious bits of adventure, or stories of Russian society, with so much point, vivacity, and finish that she would simply be the delight for the time being of every one present."

HER LIFE IN BOMBAY.

At this time Mme. Blavatsky's own home was established at Bombay, where she resided with Colonel Olcott and two or three persons, Indian and European, associated with the Theosophical Society. At first she lived in a comfortless native quarter of the town, but afterwards at a small bungalow called "The Crow's Nest," at Breach Candy, which had long been unoccupied owing to a bad reputation for snakes and ghosts, and was thus let to the Theosophists, quite willing to brave all encumbrances of this sort, on reasonable terms. The building lay on the slope of a steep hill, and the upper part, an enclosed verandah with two or three rooms opening out of it, constituted Mme. Blavatsky's quarters. Here I

visited her in 1881, and found her immersed in a constant ebb and flow of native visitors, members of the Society, and others. She would have admiring groups of such friends round her up to all hours in the evening, smoking innumerable cigarettes and talking Vedic philosophy with eager enthusiasm, or as eagerly and excitedly discussing some trumpery little incident connected with the progress or difficulties of the Society, or the misdoings of some "enemy," which a person of cooler temperament in her position would have found too insignificant to engage five minutes' thought. But Madame seemed to have no sense of the proportions of things, and the annoyance of the moment, whatever it was, would always fill her whole horizon. And then, if I may again quote a few words from my own former account of her, "in the midst of some fiery argument with a Pundit about a point of modern Hindoo belief that she might protest against as inconsistent with the real meaning of the Vedas, or a passionate remonstrance with one of her *aides* of the *Theosophist* about something done amiss that would for the time overspread the whole sky of her imagination with a thundercloud, she would perhaps suddenly 'hear the voice they did not hear'—the astral call of her distant Master, or one of the other 'Brothers,' as by that time we had all learned to call them—and forgetting everything else in an instant, she would hurry off to the seclusion of any room where she could be alone for a few moments, and hear whatever message or orders she had to receive."

AT SIMLA.

She would make no efforts at this time to cultivate friendly relations with the European society of the place, having started indeed with a very flourishing stock of misconceptions about the character of the English in India, which gave way after a time, but at first made her fancy herself, by reason of her special sympathy with the natives, as necessarily antagonistic to the Europeans. Moreover, she hated the outer forms and ceremonies of Anglo-Indian life, and would have found it a terrible penance to give up the loose wrappers she habitually wore, or the cigarettes she constantly smoked, for the sake of commonplace parties and people who knew nothing of the Vedas, and still less of the mysterious occultism in which all her deeper interests were rooted. However, it is none the less true that she did fret after a time at the isolation as regards European society, in the midst of which she lived at Bombay, and she used thoroughly to enjoy the change in this respect she obtained from time to time during her visits to Allahabad and Simla. At Simla especially she made many friends, and during the summer of 1880 she was perhaps the prominent feature of the Anglo-Indian season, for that was the year of her most sensational performances, as described in "The Occult World;" and though, of course, accounts of these no sooner began to penetrate the newspapers than they evoked outcries of ridicule and incredulity, a great many people at the time, including some very prominent members of the English community who apostatised afterwards, when the tide of scornful public incredulity set in strongly, were altogether overwhelmed by the marvels of which they were personally witness.

THE FIRST STAGE OF HER MISSION.

Up to this time we had received no glimmerings of the comprehensive or systematic teaching concerning the evolution of man and the world and the laws governing the spiritual progress of humanity, that ultimately identified the Theosophical Society with something resembling a new religion. So far Mme. Blavatsky's efforts had been altogether directed to establish the broad fact

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that there were people in existence whose knowledge and power transcended those of ordinary mortals; that they corresponded in the present day to the initiated hierophants of ancient religious systems; that some touch with the superior wisdom they possessed was to be got at through the study of Indian sacred literature; and that Western communities, in so far as they had begun to investigate abnormal super-physical phenomena by means of the practices resorted to by "spiritualists," were altogether on a wrong track. Many modern newspaper writers are so densely ignorant of everything that appertains to this investigation, that they not only mix up the silly, fraudulent imitations of spiritualistic phenomena with the real occurrences, such as they are, to which scores of eminent and entirely credible inquirers have borne testimony, but also confuse these occurrences, the central block of real experience connected with spiritualism with the theories of occult science, as these have been gradually developed in recent years through Mme. Blavatsky's agency and others which she in the first instance set in motion. It is only necessary here to explain occult teaching sufficiently to make her Theosophical work intelligible; and her attitude towards spiritualism will be made apparent when I say that the occultist's view of Nature recognises a plane of phenomena and existence directly in contact with our own, though imperceptible to commonplace physical senses, in which the inferior remnants of post-mortem humanity float about and persist for a time, while the true Ego or spiritual consciousness of every departed soul fit to have anything worth calling a spiritual life, passes off into realms with which the mediumship of the spiritualist has, as a general rule, no contact whatever.

HER OBJECTION TO SPIRITUALISM.

From the first moment when Mme. Blavatsky completed the apprenticeship of her wandering life and came back to Europe in 1870, at the close of three years spent in an Eastern seclusion, of which it is useless to speak except to persons knowing something of what occult initiation means, she regarded herself as especially bound to combat and oppose the spiritualistic movement, not from the ignorant and stupid point of view of those who regard the whole thing as a vulgar fraud, but from that of the inner penetralia of the movement itself. No one knew better than she that the phenomena of the spiritualists were often entirely genuine, but she felt herself in possession of knowledge which the most earnest spiritualists were entirely without, which enabled her to go behind the phenomena and explain them as originating from super-physical causes, quite unlike those to which they were assigned by spiritualists. To wean the spiritualists from their misconceptions was thus the real motive of the very first step she took—at Cairo, in 1870—in the direction of Theosophical work. She founded a little Society for investigating spiritualistic phenomena, and of course this action on her part has been twisted later on by her detractors into the statement that she began her public career as a spiritualistic medium. Her letters to private friends written about this time and later on from New York, whither she migrated a year or two afterwards, amply establish her bitter antagonism from the first to the whole theory of modern spiritualism, so that the charge against her that she practised as a spiritualist medium is a ludicrous inversion of the facts.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

Greatly promoted by the dogged determination and single-minded exertions of Colonel Olcott, the Theosophical Society grew rapidly during the years Mme.

Blavatsky spent at Bombay. Of course her excitable temperament and strangely defective judgment as regards the prosaic business of life were always leading "the old lady," as she came to be called at this time by her most intimate and affectionate friends, into hot water of all kinds, and she was always at war with some newspaper assailant whom she would more wisely have ignored. However, in India there was no reason why the Society should not grow. In this country a certain readiness to brave conventional opinion is still required by people who attach themselves to a movement resting on special knowledge and experience not yet hall-marked by orthodox authority, but in India there was nothing in Mme. Blavatsky's profession of belief in the existence of and acquaintance with occult initiates to offend public opinion. A similar conviction is so widely spread as to be general throughout India, while the whole programme of the Theosophical Society, in its exaltation of the importance of Indian literature and traditions, was flattering to native susceptibilities. So wherever Colonel Olcott wandered in the course of his incessant tours, he found it easy to establish branches of the Society, and these were counted by hundreds when the Theosophical household moved at the end of 1882 to Madras. A comfortable house had been purchased there by subscription for the use of the Society and the central household, and here Mme. Blavatsky assured me, when I visited her on my way home from India in 1883, she had found her final resting-place, and meant to abide quietly for the remainder of her life. Her foresight at that time did not enable her to anticipate in imagination the troubles and triumphs that still awaited her, nor the many removals yet in store for her.

IN LONDON.

Here are some extracts from a characteristic letter she wrote to my wife and myself in 1884, when she had come Londonwards as far as Nice for the sake of the sea voyage, being in a thoroughly bad state of health:—

"I have received the kind invitations of yourselves and of — and — and others. I am deeply touched by this proof of the desire to see my unworthy self, but see no use to kick against fate and try to make the realisable out of the unrealisable. I am sick, and feel worse than I felt when leaving Bombay. At sea I had felt better, and on land I feel worse. I was laid up for the whole day on first landing at Marseilles, and am laid up now. At the former place it was, I suppose, the vile emanations of an European civilised first-class hotel, with its pigs and beef, and here—well, anyhow I am falling to pieces, crumbling away like an old sea-biscuit, and the most I will be able to do will be to pick up and join together my voluminous fragments, and gluing them together, carry the ruin to Paris. What's the use of asking me to London? What shall I, what can I, do amidst your eternal fogs and the emanations of the highest civilisation? . . . What kind of company am I to civilised beings like yourselves? . . . I would become obnoxious to them in seven minutes and a quarter were I to accept it and land my disagreeable bulky self in England. Distance lends its charms, and in my case my presence would surely ruin every vestige of it."

In spite of this reluctance, the intense interest she felt in the progress of the Theosophical movement in London, and the continued pressure of her friends' wishes, brought her over to London eventually after a few weeks spent in Paris. At whatever house she stayed, her presence becoming known drew crowds of visitors anxious to see her. The constant ebb and flow of people round her never seemed to weary her. Ill as she often was, her

THE REVIEW OF REVIEWS.

nervous energy was inexhaustible, and she flung herself now into the task of promoting a Theosophical propaganda in Europe as if that were the final culmination of her work to which everything else were subordinate. No one ever more than Mme. Blavatsky acted on the principle of doing with all her might whatever work she was engaged upon at the moment.

THE ALLEGED "EXPOSURE."

But a terrible catastrophe was brewing for her all this while. A magazine published at Madras in the interest of the missionary body at that place—always bitterly inimical to the Theosophical movement, which tended to exalt native confidence in the Oriental philosophies and religions, which it was the missionaries' business to attack—obtained from a woman who had been attached to the Theosophical headquarters as a kind of housekeeper (and whom Mme. Blavatsky had very unwisely treated as a friend) certain letters purporting to be written by Madame, the contents of which seemed to show that some of the abnormal phenomena that had taken place at Madras and elsewhere had been fraudulently concocted by Mme. Blavatsky with the assistance of the ex-housekeeper and her husband. The authenticity of these letters was strenuously denied by Mme. Blavatsky; but the Psychical Research Society sent out an agent to investigate the whole imbroglio. Mr. Hodgson, the agent in question, was entirely won over in the end by the accusing side, and published a Report condemning Mme. Blavatsky unreservedly. A complete review of this disagreeable business would take up too much time.

THE REPORT OF THE PSYCHICAL RESEARCHER.

Volumes have been written about it, and while at first no doubt the leaders of the Psychical Research Society undoubtedly accepted Mr. Hodgson's view, the few people who had been intimate with Mme. Blavatsky all through the period of the transactions referred to, showed by degrees, in various pamphlets and articles, how worthless Mr. Hodgson's conclusions were, how fatally he had been hoodwinked by the enemies of the Theosophical movement at Madras, and how narrow-minded and unjust his methods of inquiry had been. To the present day, of course, people who are out of touch with the deep realities of the Theosophical movement—which, however completely its origin may be traced to Mme. Blavatsky's efforts, has long since acquired a momentum and interior justification of its own quite independent of her personality—are vaguely of opinion that Mme. Blavatsky was somehow exposed by the Hodgson Report, and that the continued regard and respect shown for her by a large Society is an unaccountable manifestation of human credulity. But, nevertheless, no one ever lived down all injurious accusation more effectually than Mme. Blavatsky, before she died, lived down the apparently at the time overwhelming denunciations of the Psychical Research Committee.

A TREMENDOUS BLOW.

It was a tremendous blow at the time, of course. She returned to India at the end of 1884, while Mr. Hodgson was carrying on his investigations there; but that gentleman never sought her explanations of the circumstances he thought suspicious, never showed her the originals of the letters on which the whole accusation turned, and disguised his unfavourable conclusions while staying as a guest at the Theosophical headquarters. Then she fell very ill again, nearly died—was in fact given over by the doctor in attendance upon her—but unexpectedly rallied, and when a little better again returned

to Europe, where, however, at the time her star seemed to have set entirely, and many of the people who had exhibited a spasmodic enthusiasm for her and her teachings in 1884, fell off both from the number of her friends and from the movement.

She wrote from Naples to my wife, in June, 1885, soon after landing:—

"The sight of your familiar handwriting was a welcome one, indeed, and the contents of your letter still more so. No, dear Mrs. Sinnett, I never thought that *you* could have ever believed that I played the tricks I am now accused of, neither you nor any one of those who have Masters in their hearts, not on their brains. Nevertheless, here I am to stand accused, without any means to prove the contrary, of the most dirty, villainous deceptions ever practised by a half-starved medium. What can I and what shall I do? Useless to either write to persuade or try to argue with people who are bound to believe me guilty to change their opinions. Let it be. The fuel in my heart is burnt to the last atom. Henceforth nothing is to be found in it but cold ashes. I have so suffered that I can suffer no more."

AT WURZBURG.

This tone of despair was very unnatural to her, and in the dejection of the moment she underrated her own reserves of strength and courage. At Wurzburg, where she settled down for a time, old friends found their way to her again one by one. She had fallen out of fashion, it was true, but for all who had got upon the track of the great principles she had been instrumental in interpreting, realms of interest lay before them which would equally have drawn them on, even if Madame Blavatsky had been as personally unworthy of respect as her worst enemies declared. But in truth the more any Theosophist has at any time become attached, through experiences or mere reasoning of his own, to the pursuit of occult knowledge and development, the better he has been able to appreciate Mme. Blavatsky's career as a whole, without worrying about petty scraps of evidence seeming to impugn the *bona fides* of this or that little manifestation of abnormal energy among the hundreds or thousands of those with whom she has been concerned. That in his most seemingly injurious discoveries Mr. Hodgson had altogether blundered, became, for all who learned to appreciate the Theosophic position, a thousand times more probable than that Mme. Blavatsky was otherwise than genuine throughout, as most certainly a great many Theosophists of their own knowledge knew her to be in regard to her general relations with what I have called the Occult World.

IN LONDON ONCE MORE.

So finally it came to pass that Mme. Blavatsky, having grown very tired of her isolation at Wurzburg, moved for a change to Ostend, and after staying on there till the spring of 1887, was brought back to London by the earnest invitation of a Theosophical group, by whose care and forethought the journey, very difficult for her in her then state of health, was facilitated by every arrangement that could be made for her comfort. Norwood, where she stayed for a few months, then became the vortex of Theosophical meetings and activities of various kinds, and afterwards several members of the Society joined together in taking a house in Lansdowne Road, Notting Hill, where "H.P.B.'s" banner was set up very proudly, and everything done by all parties concerned to emphasise in the most unequivocal way their devotion to and trust in the leader,

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whom the outer world vainly imagined to have been crushed entirely by the much-talked-of Report. "H.P.B.," I may explain, was the simple designation by which Mme. Blavatsky came to be known and addressed henceforth in the Society in accordance with her own wish. From this time on, the few remaining years of her life have seen her personal ascendancy and influence with all around her constantly increasing. Her receptions have been crowded, her spirits and energy have recovered their old vigour, schemes of all kinds have been set on foot around her for pushing on the Theosophical movement, and a practical answer has been afforded to critics who suppose that the interest Mme. Blavatsky excites turns on the "phenomena," genuine or otherwise, which have been so much talked of in connection with her, by the fact that in these last few years her public energies have been entirely bent on teaching Theosophical philosophy and ethics, and no casual frequenter of her receptions or lecture-room has ever been encouraged to expect the smallest manifestation of occult mysteries.

HER LATE WRITINGS.

In spite of this, as teacher and philosopher Mme. Blavatsky has been more closely surrounded by eager admirers than at any time in the past as a wonder-worker. She has been working more productively, moreover, than ever before as a writer. Besides a constant stream of articles in the monthly magazine she edited, she has published, during her final residence in England, the two bulky volumes known as the "Secret Doctrine," and has written as much more, which she designed to publish eventually in the shape of two more volumes added to that book. She has also published "The Key to Theosophy," and a little book of great interest for occult students, called "The Voice of the Silence." Idleness never had any charms for her, and she had to be very ill indeed before she would tear herself from her writing-table and surrender herself to her bed.

THE SOURCE OF HER STRENGTH.

This irresistible force or energy in her nature is the clue to a comprehension of her, as far as it is possible to understand her without explicit reference to the "occult world" from which her power, knowledge, and influence were really derived. She always, as it were, filled every place she occupied. She dominated every situation in which she was placed, and she had to be either greatly loved or greatly hated by those whom she came in contact with. She could never be an object of indifference. For people even who quarrelled with her and shunned her she remained an important fact. People who knew her were always talking her over; and even, though in some cases she might give offence and exasperate friends for a time, these would generally in the long run be found amongst the number of her friends once more. She was more interesting than even she could be irritating.

A GREAT SCHEME OF PHILOSOPHY.

And now the generation she has lived with is left face to face with the mass of literature she has left behind her, with the great scheme of philosophy, at the same time a vast and coherent system of thought, interpreting Nature and Man, which has been elaborated under her guidance—by herself or others in co-operation with her; and with nothing countervailing this tremendous bequest but some

trumpet imputations on the *bona fides* of a few among the endless series of marvels which have always been taking place around her, in all countries and amongst endlessly various people, all her life—imputations, moreover, which have been in themselves discredited and refuted for those who take the trouble to read both sides of that wearisome story. To discuss Mme. Blavatsky at this stage of the proceedings, with reference to a single petty controversy about a single episode in her extraordinary career, would be like criticising some great picture with exclusive reference to the smell of the paint. It was exasperating that Mme. Blavatsky could blunder so horribly as she constantly did in the choice of confidants and companions, and in the mismanagement of her extraordinary faculties. Her spiritual insight and clairvoyant gifts were compatible with a total inability to judge character in the ordinary way. Thus she was always flinging herself impetuously into the arms of people whom she had ultimately to reckon among the hosts of her "enemies," and she would often put a heavy strain on the patience of others who would have been her staunch allies if she could only have appreciated them aright. But however far such comments might be carried, the broad fact remains that Mme. Blavatsky's influence in the world for good, directly and indirectly, has been world wide, and that views of Nature and spiritual evolution which are distinctly traceable for those who understand them to the impulse given out by Theosophical writings, are fermenting in modern society to an extent that bids fair to accomplish serious and important modifications of religious thinking.

HER SPIRITUAL AFFLUATUS.

She was a wild, strange creature in many external ways, and to understand her aright and reconcile her roughness and failings with her grand spiritual affluatus is to comprehend the workings of her "Karma," and the principles guiding the rulers of the initiated hierarchy to which she was attached. It would be vain to attempt an exposition of such mysteries, except to those who have already profited to the utmost by the opportunities which contact with "H.P.B." may have afforded them. But at all events, it is easy now to leave all her eccentricities out of account—except in so far as most of those who personally knew her will remember them with affection—and to turn to the tide of thought which she has set flowing around us, to the stupendous revival of forgotten knowledge concerning the possibilities of spiritual initiation which she has accomplished. For the majority of us as yet silly badinage respecting some of her occult faculties and doings, and unworthy suspicions, have obscured the whole subject; and the grandest metaphysical and scientific theories which are lurking amongst us at the present day are ignored by conventional orthodoxy because they are for the moment associated with a name defiled by vulgar accusations. But if ever there was a case in which petty spite might silence itself in the presence of death, surely this before us is one; and by the time all existing personalities of the Theosophical movement have been forgotten, a more spiritually minded generation than ours will perhaps look back with a respect that current public opinion may not yet have the foresight to entertain, on the more than extraordinary career and character I have been endeavouring to sketch.

A. P. SINNETT.

THE REVIEW OF REVIEWS.

SOME POSTHUMOUS WRITINGS.

Lucifer for May 15th appears without any notice of Mme. Blavatsky's death; the only notice of the event which deprives the Theosophical Society of its prophetess and founder is a notice that, owing to the alarming illness of H. P. Blavatsky, the second part of the editorial, "The Negation of Science," cannot appear this month. In place of this missing editorial we have an extra article entitled "Civilisation the Death of Art and Beauty."

We, the modern-day Europeans, are Vandals as great if not greater than Atilla with his savage hordes.

Consummatum est. Such is the work of our modern Christian civilisation and its direct effects. The destroyer of art, the Shylock who, for every mite of gold he gives, demands and receives in return a pound of human flesh—in the heart-blood, in the physical and mental suffering of the masses, in the loss of everything true and lovable—can hardly pretend to deserve grateful or respectful recognition. The unconsciously prophetic *fin de siècle*, in short, is the long foreseen *fin de cycle*; when according to *Manjūmātha Sutra*, "Justice will have died, leaving as its successor blind Law, and as its Guru and guide—*Selfishness*; when wicked things and deeds will have to be regarded as meritorious, and holy actions as madness." Beliefs are dying out, divine life is mocked at; art and genius, truth and justice are daily sacrificed to the insatiable mammon of the age—money grubbing. The artificial replaces everywhere the real, the false substitutes the true.

"MY BOOKS."

Less characteristic, but of more importance from the point of view of the biographer, is the paper which appears from her pen entitled "My Books," in which she gives an account of the way in which she came to write "Isis Unveiled."

(1.) When I came to America in 1873, I had not spoken English—which I had learned in my childhood colloquially—for over thirty years. I could understand when I read it, but could hardly speak the language.

(2.) I had never been at any college, and what I knew I had taught myself; I have never pretended to any scholarship in the sense of modern research; I had then hardly read any scientific European works, knew little of Western philosophy and sciences. The little which I had studied and learned of these, disgusted me with its materialism, its limitations, narrow cut and dried spirit of dogmatism, and its air of superiority over the philosophies and sciences of antiquity.

(3.) Until 1874 I had never written one word in English, nor had I published any work in any language. Therefore—

(4.) I had not the least idea of literary rules. The art of writing books, of preparing them for printing and publication, reading and correcting proofs, were so many close secrets to me.

(5.) When I started to write that which developed later into "Isis Unveiled," I had no more idea than the man in the moon what would come of it. I had no plan; did not know whether it would be an essay, a pamphlet, a book, or an article. I knew that I *had to write it*, that was all. I began the work before I knew Colonel Olcott well, some months before the formation of the Theosophical Society.

Thus, the conditions for becoming the author of an English theosophical and scientific work were hopeful, as every one will see. Nevertheless, I had written enough to fill four such volumes as *Isis*, before I submitted my work to Colonel Olcott. Of course he said that everything—save the pages dictated—had to be rewritten. Then we started on our literary labours and worked together every evening. Some pages, the English of which he had corrected, I copied: others, which would yield to no mortal correction, he used to read aloud from my

pages, Englishing them verbally as he went on, dictating to me from my almost undecipherable MSS. It is to him that I am indebted for the English in *Isis*.

Mme. Blavatsky frankly states that she had no idea of correcting proofs, Colonel Olcott had no leisure to attend to the work, and the consequence was that they made a regular mess of it from the beginning. An immense number of fatal mistakes were allowed to pass in the confusion of the unread proofs, and as they have never been able to recast the plates these mistakes are reproduced down to the present day. The article closes with the following declaration, which, in view of the controversy that Mr. Sinnett's article is certain to provoke, is worth while quoting in full:—

A DECLARATION.

We, the undersigned Fellows of the Theosophical Society (and members of the Inner Group of the E.S.), at the stake of our personal honour and reputation, hereby declare:

That we have fully investigated all the accusations and attacks which have been made against the personal character and *bona fides* of H. P. Blavatsky, and have found them in the vast majority of cases to be entirely false, and in the few remaining instances the grossest possible distortions of the simple facts.

Knowing, moreover, that accusations of plagiarism, want of method, and inaccuracy are now being made and will in the future be brought against her literary work, we make the following statement for the benefit of all Fellows of the Theosophical Society and for the information of others:—

H. P. Blavatsky's writings, owing to her imperfect knowledge of English and literary methods, have been invariably revised, recopied, or arranged in MS., and the proofs corrected, by the nearest "friends" available for the time being (a few of whom have occasionally supplied her with references, quotations, and advice). Many mistakes, omissions, inaccuracies, etc., have consequently crept into them.

These works, however, have been put forward purely with the intention of bringing certain *ideas* to the notice of the Western world, and with no pretension on her part to scholarship or literary finish.

In order to support these views, innumerable quotations and references had to be made (in many cases without the possibility of verification by her), and for these she has never claimed any originality or profound research whatever.

After long and intimate acquaintance with H. P. Blavatsky we have invariably found her labouring for the benefit and instruction of the Theosophical Society and others, and not for herself, and that she is the first to make little of what others may consider her "learning." From further instruction, however, which we have received, we know for a fact that H. P. Blavatsky is the possessor of far deeper "knowledge" than even that which she has been able to give out in her public writings.

From all of which considerations, it logically follows that no accusations can possibly shake our confidence in H. P. Blavatsky's personal character and *bona fides* as a teacher. We do not therefore intend in future to waste our time in useless refutations, or allow ourselves to be distracted from our work by any attacks, further than to repeat our present statement.

We, however, reserve to ourselves the right of appeal to the law, when necessary.

G. R. S. MEAD.
W. R. OLD,
LAURA M. COOPER,
EMILY KISLINGBURY,
E. T. STURDY,
H. A. W. CORYN,

CONSTANCE WACHTMEISTER,
ALICE LEIGHTON CLEATHER,
CLAUDE F. WRIGHT,
ARCHIBALD KEIGHTLEY,
ISABEL COOPER-OKLEY,
ANNIE BESANT.

based on the facts of Nature, just as there are basic laws of health based on the facts concerning the human constitution. However many health fads may come and go, yet certain invariable rules of health remain; and so in morals, the essential principles are grounded in the actual facts as to the inner constitution of man. We cannot oppose the essential laws of our spiritual nature with impunity. It is a law that cannot be contravened that man may not set up his personal will against the common interest; he must live in harmony with all the other beings which together constitute that universe of which he is a part. Such is the true basis of ethics; and hence the road to Wisdom is the road of duty and self-forgetful service.

H. P. Blavatsky has restored to man his confidence in himself as a being endowed with divine creative power. Religious formulas had deprived man of this confidence by teaching him to assume a suppliant attitude before a supernatural power of capricious will and partial mercy; and science was threatening to represent man to himself as the helpless victim of inexorable and indifferent forces. The true worth of man was seen only by a few isolated seers, whose heretic voices could not avail; but H. P. Blavatsky made the essential divinity and perfectibility of man the cardinal tenet of her teachings, and showed how it was a component part of the whole system of knowledge which she expounded.

She was the initiator of an era; and the historians of the future will look back at her mission as the starting point of many new lines of progress. Many were the keynotes she struck. The contents of her chief writing, *The Secret Doctrine*, whether her own or communicated to her, are in either case equally inexplicable except upon the hypothesis that she was the Messenger from a source of real knowledge. H. P. Blavatsky has restored to man the consciousness of his own essential divinity; demonstrated the oneness of man with the universe; shown the existence of an ancient wisdom; made us aware of the existence of its guardians—the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion; and changed the entire mental, spiritual, and psychological outlook of humanity.

—Reprinted from *Lucifer-the Light-bringer*, August 1933.

"YOURS TILL DEATH AND AFTER, H.P.B."

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

Such has been the manner in which our beloved teacher and friend always concluded her letters to me. And now, though we are all of us committing to paper some account of that departed friend and teacher, I feel ever near and ever potent the magic of that resistless power, as of a mighty rushing river, which those who wholly trusted her always came to understand. Fortunate indeed is that Karma which,

for all the years since I first met her, in 1875, has kept me faithful to the friend who, masquerading under the outer mortal garment known as H. P. Blavatsky, was ever faithful to me, ever kind, ever the teacher and the guide.

In 1874, in the City of New York, I first met H. P. B. in this life. By her request, sent through Colonel H. S. Olcott, the call was made in her rooms in Irving Place, when then, as afterwards, through the remainder of her stormy career, she was surrounded by the anxious, the intellectual, the bohemian, the rich and the poor. It was her eye that attracted me, the eye of one whom I must have known in lives long passed away. She looked at me in recognition at that first hour, and never since has that look changed. Not as a questioner of philosophies did I come before her, not as one groping in the dark for lights that schools and fanciful theories had obscured, but as one who, wandering many periods through the corridors of life, was seeking the friends who could show where the designs for the work had been hidden. And true to the call she responded, revealing the plans once again, and speaking no words to explain, simply pointed them out and went on with the task. It was as if but the evening before we had parted, leaving yet to be done some detail of a task taken up with one common end; it was teacher and pupil, elder brother and younger, both bent on the one single end, but she with the power and the knowledge that belong but to lions and sages. So, friends from the first, I felt safe. Others I know have looked with suspicion on an appearance they could not fathom, and though it is true they adduce many proofs which, hugged to the breast, would damn sages and gods, yet it is only through blindness they failed to see the lion's glance, the diamond heart of H.P.B. ...

Amid all the turmoil of her life, above the din produced by those who charged her with deceit and fraud and others who defended, while month after month, and year after year, witnessed men and women entering the theosophical movement only to leave it soon with malignant phrases for H. P. B., there stands a fact we all might imitate—devotion absolute to her Master. "It was He," she writes, "who told me to devote myself to this, and I will never disobey and never turn back."

In 1888 she wrote to me privately:—

"Well, my *only* friend, you ought to know better. Look into my life and try to realize it—in its outer course at least, as the rest is hidden. I am under the curse of ever writing, as the wandering Jew was under that of being ever on the move, never stopping one moment to rest. Three ordinary healthy persons could hardly do what I *have* to do. I live an artificial life; I am an automaton running full steam until the power of generating steam stops, and then—good-bye! ... Night before last I was shown a bird's-eye view of the Theosophical Societies. I saw a few earnest reliable Theosophists in a death struggle with the world in general, with other—nominal but ambitious—Theosophists. The former are greater in numbers than you may think, and *they prevailed*, as you in *America will prevail*, if you only remain staunch to the Master's programme and true to yourselves. And last night I saw and now I feel strong—such as I am in my body—and ready to fight for Theosophy and the few *true* ones to my last breath. The defending forces have to be judiciously—so scanty they are—distributed over the globe, wherever Theosophy is struggling against the powers of darkness."

Such she ever was; devoted to Theosophy and the Society organized to carry out a program embracing the world in its scope. Willing in the service of the cause to offer up hope, money, reputation, life itself, provided the Society might be saved from every hurt, whether small or great. And thus bound body, heart and soul to this entity called the Theosophical Society, bound to protect it at all hazards, in face of every loss, she often incurred the resentment of many who became her friends but would not always care for the infant organization as she had sworn to do. And when they acted as if opposed to the Society, her instant opposition seemed to them to nullify professions of friendship. Thus she had but few friends, for it required a keen insight, untinted with personal feeling, to see even a small part of the real H. P. Blavatsky.

But was her object merely to form a Society whose strength should lie in numbers? Not so. She worked under directors who, operating from *behind the scene*, knew that the Theosophical Society was, and was to be, the nucleus from which help might spread to all the people of the day, without thanks and without acknowledgement. Once, in London, I asked her what was the chance of drawing the people into the Society in view of the enormous disproportion between the number of members and the millions of Europe and America who neither knew of nor cared for it. Leaning back in her chair, in which she was sitting before her writing desk, she said:—

“When you consider and remember those days in 1875 and after, in which you could not find any people interested in your thoughts, and now look at the wide-spreading influence of theosophical ideas—however labelled—it is not so bad. We are not working merely that people may call themselves *Theosophists*, but that the doctrines we cherish may affect and leaven the whole mind of this century. This alone can be accomplished by a small earnest band of workers, who work for no human reward, no earthly recognition, but who, supported and sustained by a belief in that Universal Brotherhood of which our Masters are a part, work steadily, faithfully, in understanding and putting forth for consideration the doctrines of life and duty that have come down to us from immemorial time. Falter not so long as a few devoted ones will work to keep the nucleus existing. You were not directed to found and realise a Universal Brotherhood, but to form the nucleus for one; for it is only when the nucleus is formed that the accumulations can begin that will end in future years, however far, in the formation of that body which we have in view.”

H. P. B. had a lion heart, and on the work traced out for her she had the lion's grasp; let us, her friends, companions and disciples, sustain ourselves in carrying out the designs laid down on the trestle-board, by the memory of her devotion and the consciousness that behind her task there stood, and still remain, those Elder Brothers who, above the clatter and the din of our battle, ever see the end and direct the forces distributed in array for the salvation of “that great orphan—Humanity.”

—Extracts from article in *Lucifer*, June 1891

Hpho-Wa and “The Mystery”

G. DE PURUCKER

In the case of H. P. Blavatsky, there is one extremely important element of the mystery which surrounded her, and the process which took place in her inner constitution, to which we point only and then pass on. It is connected with a Tibetan teaching of the Mahâyâna School, which teaching is called the doctrine of ‘Hpho-wa,’ and has reference in her case to her intimate spiritual and psychological connection with her Tibetan ‘Home,’ but is of too sacred and esoteric a character to discuss in a published work. Mere genius does not show in any of its phases the extraordinary attributes of the spiritual and intellectual and psychological nature which H. P. Blavatsky possessed in common with all other World-Teachers. How often has she herself not set on record in her letters and in her writings, her own state of mind with regard to these matters, always expressed by her with the utmost care and prudence, however, and always rather by hint and by allusion than by direct and open speech. Yet no one can collect these scattered references, often humorous, sometimes sad, reminding one of Jesus’ cry in the Garden of Gethsemane, without feeling most forcefully that there is behind it all a secret carefully guarded as the most sacred and holiest event in her life. Yes, H. P. Blavatsky was a genius, but she was more; she was a human phenomenon of the most joyful and noblest self-sacrifice that it is possible to conceive of, yet a self-sacrifice withal, which, as she herself taught, brought her a joy and a peace that nothing else in the world ever could have brought to her....

—H. P. Blavatsky *the Mystery*, p. 26

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If Theosophy prevailing in the struggle, its all-embracing philosophy strikes deep root into the minds and hearts of men, if its doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma, in other words, of Hope and Responsibility, find a home in the lives of the new generations, then, indeed, will dawn the day of joy and gladness for all who now suffer and are outcast. For real Theosophy is ALTRUISM, and we cannot repeat it too often. It is brotherly love, mutual help, unswerving devotion to Truth. If once men do but realize that in these alone can true happiness be found, and never in wealth, possessions, or any selfish gratification, then the dark clouds will roll away, and a new humanity will be born upon earth. Then, the GOLDEN AGE will be there, indeed.

But if not, then the storm will burst, and our boasted western civilization and enlightenment will sink in such a sea of horror that its parallel History has never yet recorded.

—H. P. Blavatsky: *BCW IX*, 202